

THE
CRAFTSMEN:
A
SERMON,
OR

PARAPHRASE upon several Verses
of the xix Chapter of the *Acts of the
Apostles.*

Composed by DANIEL BURGESS, and intended to be
preach'd by him in the *High Times*, but prevented
by the burning of his Meeting House.

Nihil rerum mortalium tam instabile ac flexum est quam
fama potentia non sua vi nixa. TACIT.

*Large Mastives only have the Knack,
To throw the Bear upon his Back;
But when the unwildly Beast is thrown,
Mungrils will serve to keep him down.*

The Seventh Edition.

LONDON:

Printed by and for A. Moor, near St. Paul's,
1732.

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MEMORIAL

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SERMON, or Paraphrase upon several Verses in
the xix. Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

I Shall not this Day, my Beloved, as the usual manner is, accost you with the Scraps of a Verse, or only with a whole Verse, out of any part of the Gospel; which Method is often made use of in such Places as this, purely to avoid telling what comes after; but shall chuse for my Text the greatest Part of the 19th. Chapter of the Acts: And in Discourfing upon this Portion of Scripture, so fruitful in good Instructions and Examples, I shall confine my self to the following Method.

I. *First*, I shall make some general Observations upon the Behaviour of the Apostle *Paul* and his Ministry.

II. *Secondly*, I shall Discourse more particularly upon several Verses in this Chapter: And,

III. *Thirdly and Lastly*, I shall draw from the Whole some useful and seasonable Inferences, and then conclude.

I. I shall make some general Observations upon the Apostle *Paul*. And 1st. of all, my Brethren, it is no

worthy, that *Paul* made the greatest Change that ever Man did, even from a Persecutor to an Apostle; two Characters as opposite as that of *Lucifer* to an Angel of Light. As soon as Light from the Lord fell upon him, he no longer breaths *Threatnings and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord*, as he had in Fore-time, nor puts in Execution the Orders he had about him from the High-Priest, or Archbishop of the *Jews*, to bring the first Christians and Dissenters of those Days bound to *Jerusalem*. On the contrary, tho' he was just before an hard-hearted Persecutor for the Church by Law Established, on a sudden he becomes a Lover of the Saints; and now *Behold he prayeth!* Acts ix. 11.

1st, Let us learn a Lesson from hence, dearly Beloved, as we go along; namely, that as soon as the Fear of the Lord entereth into a Man's Heart, the Sword of Persecution droppeth out of his Hand. Peace which is the Barge of the Gospel; and Cruelty, which is the Coat of Arms of Satan, cannot dwell together, *Behold he prayeth!*

2^{dly}, It is observable, that when a Zealot leaves his party, and turns Christian, how very apt the High Party are, ungratefully to forget all his former wicked Merit, which made him dear to them; and to persecute him for Apostatizing into Mercy and Grace. While *Paul* continued the fiery Flayl of the Godly, the Priests held him in high Favour, and trusted him with their *Ecclesiastical Commission*; And for what? *Why, to bring bound to Jerusalem all those of this Way*; Of what way? *Why all that forsook the established Synagogue and followed Christ.*

3^{ly}, Observe, my Brethren, that Conscience and Non-conformity had the Powers of the World against them 1700 Years ago. *Paul* the Blasphemer, had a Post; but *Paul* the Convert, *Paul* the Saint is allowed no Tolerati-on; yea they watched the Gates Day and Night to kill him; for, *Behold he prayeth!*

4^{thly}, It is observable from the whole History of *Paul*, that the Grace of God makes a Man both meek under Sufferings, and bold for Christ. Here our Convert neither returns the Injury, nor slack his Pace in planting the Gospel; both hard Tasks! He risk'd his Life and

aboured

laboured in the Vineyard without Pay; A rare thing in this our Day! when the first Motive for Overseeing of Souls, is so much a Year. The Apostle drove no Bargain about Preaching, nor made a Marker of Salvation.

Oh! my Beloved, how many dignified Drones have we in our Time, who set up for Likeness to the Apostles, without any Likeness; who take great Sums for mock-Apostleship, when nothing thrives by their Ministry, but their Bellies! This, my Friends, is lamentable, but it is lamentably true.

II. I haste now to my Second General Head, and will discourse particularly upon several Verses in this Chapter.

I begin with Verse the 8th, *And he went into the Synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three Months, disputing and persuading the Things concerning the Kingdom of God.*

1st, *And he went into the Synagogue.* Observe we here, 1st, my beloved Brethren, that as great Bigots as the Jews were, and as great a Dissenter as Paul was, yet they suffered him to preach in their Synagogues, or Churches. He had a clear Stage, tho' perhaps not equal Favour. Now think ye, my Friends, if the same Apostle should come among us here in London, at this time, that he would be permitted to preach in his own Church, unless he first qualified himself according to the Forms and Ceremonies of the Church of England by Law establish'd? or would he, trow ye, get any Preferment that the black Dons could hinder him from, in case he persisted to preach what his Master preached before him, viz. that *Christ's Kingdom was not of this World?*

2dly, My Beloved, we may see here, the great Point of Paul's Preaching; *He disputed and persuaded the Things concerning the Kingdom of God.* Not a Word of his own spiritual Dominion; nor a Word of Episcopal Sovereigns, who were to descend as it were, from his Loins, and who without his Inspiration or Miracles, were to succeed him in what he never had; worldly Wealth, worldly Grandeur, and worldly Power; Things which always mar the Kingdom of God, instead of promoting it; there being no Fellowship between Christ and Belials.

Let us now proceed to the 9th Verse, and see what that says; *But when divers were hardened, (observe he says, when divers were hardened and believed not, but spake evil of that Way before the Multitude, he departed from them, and separated the Disciples, disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus.*

The Priests, no doubt, who traded in Ceremonies, and knew nothing of Jesus Christ, or of inward Holiness, were nettled at a new Religion, which taught Men a plain Path to Heaven, without the Incumbrances of Sacrifices, or Priests, or Fopperies; a Religion, that had professed Enmity to all secular Gain and all holy Trifling.

Marvel not at it, my Brethren, a Religion without a Hierarchy, and Godliness without Gain, will never please any Set of High Priests: Nothing will go down with them but Pride and Grimace, and the ready Penny. Poor *Paul* had nothing about him of all this, nor did he teach a Religion that had. All that he brought, was a Christ crucified, and Salvation in and through him. *They therefore spake evil of that Way before the Multitude*; that is, the Priests told the People that *Paul* was an Heretick, and his Doctrine was Schism; but for themselves, they had Antiquity and the Fathers on their Side, with an orthodox Church full of decent Types and Ceremonies.

There needed no more to prevent the Apostle from doing any good among them: *So he departed from them.* This was all the Punishment he inflicted on them, and this was enough. He who had the Holy Ghost could have inflicted Death or Misery on them; but it was opposite to the Genius of his Religion, which allows spiritual Pastors to feed their Flocks, but not force them, nor to punish them, if they refuse to feed. If a Man has not a Mind to be saved, he has the worst of it himself; and what is it to the Priests? as Master *Selden* will remarks.

This, my Brethren, was the Primitive Excommunication. If you could work no good upon a Man; or if that Man worked Mischief to you, or gave you Scandal; why you wou'd not keep Company with him. But to give him to the Devil, because he was already going to

to the Devil of himself, is to be a Minister of Christ the backward way. Besides there was no need of it. The Apostle in my Text, neither curses these unbelieving High Churchmen; *who hardened themselves* against him, nor censures them, or fines them; all which he who had, the Power of Miracles, could have done, had he liked it. He barely *departed from them*. And if he did not damn them for the sake of their Souls, so neither did he surrender them to *Beelzebub* for the sake of their Money. He demanded not a gray Groat of them; So far was he from telling them, *Gentlemen, I am your spiritual Prince, pray pay me my Revenues*. Paul was a Witness of the Resurrection, a disinterested Witness, and claimed no Dues; tho' others since do in his Name, without being real Witnesses of the Resurrection, or disinterested Witnesses of any thing else about it.

Disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus. Mark here my beloved, that both Schools and Synagogues, or Churches, were open to him, tho' he was but a new Commer, and a Non-conformist. Mark, moreover, that he barely *disputed or reasoned*. He was a Stranger to the Doctrine of *Compulsion*. He was an Apostle, by virtue of whose Words and Power, all Clerical Acts are pretended to be done ever since: and yet he himself did none, satisfying himself with saving Souls, by Exhortation and the Assistance of the Spirit, which are not *Clerical Acts*. He was the chief Pastor upon Earth, and held his Commission immediately from God, but he imposed nothing but his Advice, Reason, and good Words upon those that heard him. He could have forced them (had not the Spirit so directed) to have swallowed implicitly all he said; and either destroyed or distressed all that refused. But the Lord Christ, my Brethren, in his dealings with humane kind, never uses Means that are *inhumane*.

Here you may distinguish the Spirit of Christ from the Spirit of *High-Church*. For trow ye, my Friends, that Christ or his Apostles ever delegated to weak and passionate Men, Powers and Privileges which, infallible and inspired as they were, they never assumed to them-

selves, let us wonder, my Brethren, at the Impudence of some Men in black!

And this continued for the space of two Years. Observe, it is not said that he kept a Curate all the while.

Let us go on to some following Verses. *And God wrought special Miracles, by the hands of Paul; so that from his Body were brought unto the Sick, Handkerchiefs, or Aprons, and their Diseases departed from them, and the evil Spirits went out of them, vers. 11. 12.*

Observe, here are certain Signs of a Power from God, and they who pretended to a Power from him, without manifesting the same by certain Signs, are certainly Cheats and Impostors. For a Power given by the all-wise God, must be given for some certain End which will infallibly be brought about. It is not consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness to give it, and yet leave uncertain that he has given it, when a plain Manifestation of it is of the utmost Importance to the World, and to the Purpose for which it is given. If a Man brings not infallible Proofs of his Power, how shall I know that he has it? Demonstration must go before Conviction, and Conviction before Consent. We cannot embrace for Truth, what we take to be a Lye. All which will farther appear from the following Verses.

Then certain of the Vagabond Jews, Exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil Spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth, v. 13.

We may perceive here, that the Apostles had Apes in their own Time; Fellows who set up for their Successors, before they themselves were dead. They were *Exorcists or Conjurers*, so called, I presume, from their pretending to dispossess haunted Houses, by the Dint of Spells and forms of Words. They had now got a new *Form of Words*, and were going to Work with them as fast as they could, boasting, no doubt, great things of their own Power. And indeed they took a politick Method to resemble the Apostle, had they succeeded in it; but they miscarried miserably, as will be shewn anon.

But what shall we say of some Moderns (more shame-

lest than these Vagabond *Jews*) who will right or wrong, be Successors to the Apostles, without doing any thing that is Apostolick, but what every reasonable Man may do as well. They shew no Signs but thole of Gracelesness and Pride; and do no Wonders, but in the Luxury of their Lives.

And there were seven Sons of one Sceva, a Jew; and chief of the Priests, which did so, v. 14. More Mimickers of Miracles! We see the Trade was growing sweet, but the Sauce proved Sower; for the evil Spirit answered and said, *Jesus I know,, and Paul I know, but who are ye?* An angry and contemptuous Question, but full of good sense. But the worst follows: *And the Man in whom the evil Spirit was, leapt upon them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that House naked and wounded.*

1. Observe here, 1st, That we may easily learn what Power Men have from God, by their Power over the Devil. When *Paul* gave the Word of Command, the Devil did not stand shilly shally, nor pretend to part with one who was employed as the Lord's General, against the Power of Darkness, but was forced to march Bag and Baggage; and glad, no doubt, that he could troop off in a whole Skin.

But it is quite otherwise, when Interlopers and Craftsmen in hopes to make a Penny of Satan, pretend to drive him out of his Quarters, tho' they come in the Name of the Lord. The Devil, in this Case, sets up the Flag of Defiance, and tells them they are Scoundrels to their Faces; *Who are ye?* Well spoken Satan! They are *Vagabonds, Jews and Priests*, and the Devil chastiz'd them accordingly. *They fled out of that House naked and wounded.* The Devil got the Day, and remained Master of the Field, and the Baggage. *He prevailed against them.* They forged a Commission, and the Lord Jesus, whose Name they abused, would not stand by them.

2. Let us here, 2dly, my Friends, think it no shame to learn a Lesson from the Devil, and take no Man's Word, who pretends to command us in Matters of Faith and Spiritual Obedience, tho' he comes in the Name of the Lord. Let us examine him first, and try our own Strength

upon him; *Who are ye?* A pat Question and a proper! Let us, Beloved, never lose sight of it, especially when any Man would controul our Belief. Be not determined by outside Shape and Colour. A long Gown may cover an *Exorcist*, but let us peep into his Inside, seach his Life and Principles; let us try whether he is an Apostle in his Heart and his Actions; and if he be not, let us despise him; yea, let us *prevail against him*.

3. Observe, 3dly, What great and Solemn Rogueries are carried on in the Name of Christ and his Apostles, even Conjurers and Formalists reap their Harvest, as it were, with the Sickle of the Gospel. And if such bold Cheats could be practiced, as it were, under this great Apostle's Nose; what may not be done now he is so far off: How many *Exorcists*, how many Sons of *Sceva*, trow ye, have we at this time among us, and in this enlightened Protestant Country? Great numbers, God wot, yea, great Societies. Every Man, who, in the Name of Christ or *Paul* claims to himself Gain or Dominion, is a Son of *Sceva*, and can be no Guard against the Devil, who despises him. Judge ye now what swarms we have!

4. Observe from hence, 4thly and lastly, The true Reason of the great Wickedness which is in the World; namely, because we maintain an Army against the Devil, of whom he stand not in awe. In the first Ages he was driven out of every Corner, and now he possesses every Corner; for why? they had Apostles, and we have the Sons of *Sceva*.

And many that believed came and confessed, and shewed their Deeds, v. 18. that is many who had been deluded and misled by these Reverend Deceivers, were now undeceived.

And many also of them which used curious Arts, brought their Books together, and burnt them before all Men; and they counted the Price of them, and found it fifty thousand Pieces of Silver, v. 19.

How fertile must the World then have been in mysterious and conjuring Books! what Systems of Nonsense and Knavery must have been here! what Glosses, Commentaries, and Riddles! For we may be sure, my beloved,

ved, these were not Books of useful Knowledge and Learning, or Books that taught Virtue and Mortality; since such, without doubt, the Apostles would have preserved: But they were juggling and conjuring Books, such as contained Heathen Traditions, with false Miracles and false Doctrines, and were probably full of metaphysical Distinctions, and the controversial Divinity of those Days; such as Bundles of foolish Sermons, Pagan Systems, Articles of their Faith, Formularies, lying Misteries, Caballistical Nonsense, and the high Church Pamphlets of that Age; all opposite to divine Truths utter'd by Paul.

So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed, v. 20. Take notice here, Men and Brethren, that the ready way to make the Word of God grow and prevail, was to burn all the Priests Books. Oh, my beloved that our Eyes were also opened! what Fuel should we have for Bonfires!

Nothing occurs remarkable between this and the 23d Verse, which tells us, that *the same time there arose no small Stirs about that Way.* And then follows the Reason. *v. 24, 25, 26, 27. For a certain Man named Demetrius, a Silver Smith, which made silver Shrines for Diana, brought no small Gain unto the Craftsmen, whom he called together, with the Workmen of like Occupation; and said, Sirs, ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth: Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much People, saying, that they be no Gods which are made with Hands; so that not only this our Craft is in Danger to be set at nought; but also, that the Temple of the great Goddess Diana should be dispised, and her Magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the World worshipeth.*

A notable Speech, and a rare Confession! he kept a Shop for the Diety, and got a World of Money by this godly Trade; and rather than lose it, he will oppose Christianity, and maintain his Craft against Jesus Christ.

This mechanical Priest, and his Brethren, Retainers to Diana, had lost many kind Customers by Paul's preaching; their holy Gear began to lie upon their Hands;

Folks

Folks Eyes were opened, and the Cheat was disclosed; Upon which the Reverend Dr. *Demetrius* and the whole Convocation of Priests and Craftsmen, resolve to accuse the Apostle as an *Enemy to the Church*, and an Underminer of its *Rights and Interests*. Sirs, says Mr. Prolocutor, *Ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth*. "Now, if
 "this *Paul* goes on to perswade People, as he docs, that
 "all our Gain is built on Deceit, and that our Trade is
 "of humane Institution, our Function will fall into Con-
 "tempt, and we into Beggary.

All this was artfully address'd to the Interest and Avarice of his Brother Craftsmen, who sharing the Benefit of the Cheat, and living plentifully upon the Ecclesiastical Revenues of the establish'd Church of *Diana*, had Motives sufficient to engage them in the Defence of the said Church and Cheat.

Now he has a Knack for catching the Bigots, by telling them, what *Danger* there was of the *Church*; and lest the *Temple of the great Goddess Diana* should be despised, and her *Magnificence* be destroyed, whom all *Asia* and the *World* worshipped. What pity it was that so sure and primitive a Church and the most Orthodox and best constituted Church in all *Asia*, should be in such piteous Danger!

1. Observe here, first, dearly beloved, what False Knaves and godless Infidels these Priestly Crew were. If they believed that their Mistress, the Goddess, who had indeed the best accustomed Church in all *Asia*, was as great as they pretended her to be, why did they mistrust her Power to protect her own Grandure, and defend her self? especially against a single Man, whom they represented as an Enemy to the Gods and their Church, and who was consequently the more easy to be defeated or destroyed. But if they knew her unable to defend her Divinity, and support her Church, with them her Priests and Tradesmen; then were they in reality Cheats and Unbelievers, tho' outwardly grave and zealous Votaries.

2. Take Notice, in the 2d place, of the wide Difference that there is between these high Priests Church, and the Bible-Church! The Priests Church being a trading Church, and Money being her End, and Grimace her

her Ware ; which were the Source of their Authority and Reverence. Whatever enlightened the People, marred the Market of the Priests. *By this Craft we have our Wealth* ; While we can by Brawling and Lying put off “ our Trumpery for Religion, it will always sell well ; “ otherwise, it will not be worth a Groat ; let us con- “ tend for our Trumpery, and cry, *The Church !* According to we find the Auditory in the next Verse actually practising the Advice given them by this High Church Preacher, and roaring for *Diana of Ephesus*, or, which is the same thing *for the Church*. *By this Craft we have our Wealth*.

This, my Friend, was the Spirit of the Priests Church, so opposite to that of the *Bible-Church* ; which, being founded upon a Rock, fears neither Rain, nor Storms, nor Dissenters, nor False Brethren ; yea, she is founded upon a Rock, *which Rock is Christ* ; and whoever trusts in him, and believes the Scripture, cannot think his Church in Danger. Indeed, if his Church is founded upon Hoods and Caps, and Cringes and Forms, and filthy Lucre, he may well dread the Judgment of God, and the Reason of Man ; for they are both against him and his *Dowdy*, and his Church will totter as soon as ever common Sense takes it by the Collar. By fearing for the Superstructure, he owns the Foundation to be sandy. *By this Craft we have our Wealth*.

These *Craftsmen* keep a Rout about the Danger of their Church, why, my Brethren, it ought to be in Danger, like a sorry Bundle of Inventions and Gimcracks, as it was, But for the Pure, the Primitive Church of Christ, *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*. Yea, the *Craftsmen* shall not prevail against it, who are the sorest Enemies it ever had—*It is founded upon a Rock*. Paul, does not once complain in all the New Testament, that his Church was in Danger, nor does any other of the Apostles or Evangelists. *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever*. What say our *Craftsmen* to this? either they know it not, or believe it not. Paul, whenever he mentions Dangers or Perils in his Epistles, means Perils to his own Person ; Nor did he
by

by his own Person, ever in all his Life, mean the Church. But *Paul* had the Spirit of God; he was no *Craftsman*.

We, my Beloved, who are Christians, trust to the Verracity of God, that he will for ever defend the Holy Revelation that he has given us. Let us on our part, treat it as it becomes its Dignity and omnipotent Author. Let us not turn our Religion into a Play, nor dishonour it with Baubles, as the Manner of the Popish *Craftsmen* is, who convert their Churches into Puppet-shews and Musick-Meetings; and then when they are laughed at, cry they are in Danger. Pretty Fellows! to raise our Mirth whether we will or no, and then make us choak our selves to keep it in. *Their Craft is in Danger to be set at Naught.* They know its Value, and quake, lest other People should know it too. Oh the Impudence of *Craftsmen*! how boldly they mock God, and in his Name pick Pockets!

3. Let us observe, 3dly, my Brethren, that the Christian Religion, which prevailed against all the Powers of the World, cannot be in Danger from all the Powers of the World. And every Church may be in Danger but a Christian Church. Let us praise the Lord, my Christian Friends, that our Church is safe.

Proceed we now to the 28th Verse: *And when they heard these sayings, they were full of Wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

1. We may remark here, first, My Friends, the violent Effects of a hot Sermon, however absurd and villainous. Here this Dr. *Demetrius*, whose Craft was all his Religion, lugs Heaven into a Dispute about his Trade, and tacks the Salvation of his Hearers to the Gain he made of his Shrines; yet this awaken'd no Indignation in the seduced and ill judging Auditory; but straight *they were full of Wrath and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians: The Church! the Church!*

2. 2dly, We may remark, that Ignorance is the Mother of Zeal. *They were full of Wrath.* For what? Why for *Diana of Ephesus*. A God created by a Stone-cutter; an insensible Piece of a Rock, guarded by a Band of Priests; who, hard as it was, picked a fine Liveliness out

out of it. But *Paul* had opened some Mens Eyes, and the Loaves began to come in but slowly. This enraged the *Craftsmen*, and they enrag'd the People. The Priests lost Customers, and the People lost their Senses. Such is the Power of Delusion over dark and slavish Minds! Let but the Priest point at a Windmill and cry the Church is falling, his Congregation will venture their Brains, to stop the Sails. What a rare Army does Zeal raise, when Religion and Reason do not spoil the Muster, or stop their March!

The next is the 29th Verse; *And the whole City was filled with Confusion; and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, Men of Macedonia, Paul's Companions in Travel, they rushed with one accord into the Theatre.*

And the whole City was filled with Confusion. Who doubts it, when Church was the Cry, and the Priests had begun it? Give them but their Way, and allow them but to assert their own Claims, they will quickly turn all things, Human and Divine, Top-sy-turvey. Here is a whole City thrown into Confusion, purely because a Branch of the Priestly Trade, infamous, forged, and irreligious, was like to fall before the Word of God preached by *Paul*.

1st, This shews, Sirs, that there is nothing so lying and so vile, that they will not justify. They knew that their Church was a Creature of their own composing; that the Worship performed in it was a Burlesque-worship, contrived by themselves, and paid to a senseless Image; and they knew that the whole was an impudent Delusion, framed by human Invention. And yet, you see, my Beloved, how they raise Heaven and Earth in Defence of their Forgeries and Superstitions. Not a Tittle will they part with, not a Shrine, not a Ceremony. No, rather than this, they publish Lyes, they deceive the People, they decry sober Piety, they raise a Sedition and confound all Things. *By this Craft we have our Wealth.*

2. Behold here, 2^{dly}, the different Behaviour of Truth and Falshood! or, in other Words, of *Paul* and the *Craftsmen*! When Men contend for Truth, they do it calmly, because they are sure it will support it self. But Error, conscious

conscious of its weak Foundation, flies instantly for Support, to Rage and Oppression. *Paul* reasons peaceably and powerfully; *Demetrius* deceives, scolds, and raises a Mob. But I defy the Craftsmen to shew me one Mob of *Paul's* raising in all the New Testament.

The Apostle wanted no Mob; he had no factious Designs; he meddled not with Human Affairs; he taught Peace and practised it; he neither blended Politicks nor Gain with his Doctrine; he had no Grimace to support; no mock Reverence to acquire or defend; he abhor'd pious Fraud, and exposed it: he shewed the People the manifest Truths of the Gospel, and of Reason, and that presently open'd their Eyes to see the impious Delusions and bold Impositions of the reigning Priests; and hence began the Rage of Dr. *Demetrius* and his Mob.

3. From this you may learn, 3dly, my Friends, that one Man, with Truth on his Side, is enough to frighten a whole Army, yea, a whole Hierarchy of *Craftsmen*, and to defeat them if he has but a fair Hearing. You see also the graceless Methods that red-hot High Priests take, to confute such a Man: First, they dress him up as an Achiest and an Enemy to the Church, and then set the Mob upon him; for the Law was not against *Paul*, as we shall see presently, and yet they meant to destroy *Paul* against Law. An implacable Tribe! no Power can satisfy them, that has either Mercy in it, or Bounds to it: Craft is their Calling, and Lies and Violence the Tools of their Trade.

Oh, my Christian Friends! what Wolves are Men, yea what Wolves are Priests, when they have hardened themselves against the Grace of God? Without Meekness and Peace there can be no such thing as the Fear of the Lord; witness Dr. *Demetrius* and those that are like him. Let us pray for their Amendment, that it would please the Lord to take away their reprobate Mind.

And having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, Men of Macedonia, Paul's Companions in Travel, they rushed with one accord into the Theatre.

Gaius and Aristarchus, Dissenters to be sure, and Non-conformist Preachers! Men of Macedonia; Foreigners

that is something familiar; unless perhaps they were Lords Archbishops of some Country where they did not reside. But *Paul* you see had no spiritual Pride, nor received his Fellow Christians upon the Knee, as some who pretend to be his Successors at *Rome*, and elsewhere, do in our Days.

They rushed with one accord into the Theatre. Ay, they had got their Prey, a Brace of Non-cons, and carry'd them into the Play-house to bait them. What hooping and hollowing, I warrant ye, about the Two godly Christians! How many Fanaticks, think ye, they were called, and Disturbers of the Peace of *Diana's* High-Church? Doubtless they were charged with writing Books and Papers against *Diana's* Clergy, and the Establish'd Gewgaws; and perhaps, *Paul* was suspected for having a Hand in them, and some of his Epistles were produced to make good the Charge. Well! here they are, the Priests their Accusers, the Mob their Judges, and Truth their Grime! Men and Wickedness are still the same; we have seen the like in our Times.

And when Paul would have entered in unto the People, the Disciples suffered him not, v. 30. Here is, on one hand, the Boldness of a Man, who has God for his Guide; and on the other, the Prudence of Men, who knew the Mercy of Priests and Mobs. *And therefore, certain of the Chief of Asia; which were his Friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the Theatre, v. 31.*

The 32d Verse is pregnant with Instruction. *Some therefore cried one thing, and some another; for the Assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.*

Some cried one thing, and some another. The true Genius of a Rabble, led by their Priests and their Passions, against Peace and against Religion! They are united in their Zeal to do Mischief, but they differ how they shall go about it. They are for the Church, *Diana's* Church, it is true; and shew it by Rage and Noise; but they are under no Rules, except the general one taught them by the Craftsmen, viz. to be fierce for the Church, against

the Apostle; for the rest, every man is his own Master, and every Man will be heard first.

A rare Picture of our present Mob, headed by one of themselves in a Gown; I mean, our *Modern Demetrius*. I think the Man is no great *Craftsman*; but he has got *Diana* in his Head, and he himself is in the Head of the Rabble. But as to the Point of Understanding, we may throw him and his Rabble together in one short Prayer and cry with our blessed Lord, when the *Jewish Priests* were putting him to Death, for bearing Witness against their carnal Inventions, their Hypocrisy and their Cruelty; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

The Assembly was confused. There was no Order, no Reason, no Moderation among them. The very Type of our High Church Mob again! And the more part knew not wherefore they were come together: That is, tho', as I said before, they came determin'd to do Mischief, yet they were at a Loss what Species of it to go about, till their General, the Priest, gave them the Word. Oh, my Beloved, let us lament the horrible State of those poor unregenerate Souls, whose Pastors feed them with Poison instead of the Food of Life, and teach them Rage instead of Religion. Take Warning, Sirs, I say unto you, take Warning; beware of *Diana* and her *Craftsmen*, and cleave to your Bibles as you love your Souls.

And they drew *Alexander* out of the Multitude, the Jews (the believing Jews) putting him forward. And *Alexander* beckon'd with his Hand, and would have made his Defence unto the People. But when they knew that he was a Jew, (that is, a believing Jew) all with one Voice about the space of Two Hours, cried out, Great is *Diana* of the Ephesians, v. 33, 34.

Was there ever such a Couple of Twin Cases as theirs and ours! Verily, our High Church Bigots and Ragamuffians are the undoubted Descendants of *Diana's Tories* at *Ephesus* Seventeen Hundred Years ago. Nor is the one whit mended; they are still the Black-guard of the *Craftsmen*, blind, outrageous, and loud.

We too, my Brethren, would, like the good *Alexander* in my Text, make our Defence unto the People; but they

they will not hear us. Pray mark the different manner of our disputing from theirs, and the contrary Arguments we use! we appeal to the Bible; *they cry, the Church!* and answer the Word of the Lord with a Brickbat: Oh horrible!

Great is Diana of the Ephesians! High Church for ever! and 'tis likely they swore to it. This was the Cry for the space of two Hours. Poor Souls! it was all they could say, and all that their Priests had taught them to say, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* Was ever Church more pithily defended, certainly the Craftsmen of our Days have learned their Logick from their *Ephesian* Predecessors. *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* I have heard a Sermon a full Hour long upon the same Subject, and yet not more said, nor better.

You have already, my Beloved, heard two Speeches, one from the Craftsmen, and the other from the Mob. Dr. *Demetrius* being in the Chair, tells his Brethren of the Trade, that *by this Craft* (observe, by this Craft!) *they had their Wealth.* This is the first part of his Sermon; and in troth, he puts the best Leg foremost, and uses his strongest Arguments first; he fairly puts the Stress of his Faith upon the *ready Rhino*, and in the very Dawn of his Discourse, shews him to be Orthodox. I dare say the whole Convocation was convinced. He has however, a rare Gudgeon behind for the Mob, and what should that be, trow ye, but a Charge of Heresy against *Paul*? The Apostle had the Assurance to publish, forsooth, that *they be no Gods which are made with Hands*: Terrible Atheism against the Establish'd Divinity! and see what a bitter Spirit it raised.

This, my Friends, was the Priest's Speech or Sermon: Now hear the Mob's Speech once more, for it is a Rarity, as we say in *Barkshire*. Why they cried out till their Throats were jaded, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*; and lugged a Couple of painful Dissenting Ministers into the *Bear-garden*, where I am sorry we must leave them to the Mercy of High Church-men.

Now, my Christian Friends, you shall hear a third Speech, which by its Honesty, Moderation, and good Sense,

Sense, will refresh you after all the Knavery and Impudence, in the Craftsmen, and all this Sottishness and Fury in the People.

And when the Town-Clerk had appeased the People, he said, Ye Men of Ephesus, what Man is there that knoweth not now that the City of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great Goddess Diana, and of the Image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these Things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly: For ye have brought hither these Men, which are neither Robbers of Churches nor yet Blasphemers of your Goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius and the Craftsmen which are with him, have a Matter against any Man, the Law is open, and there are Deputies; let them implead one another, v. 35, 36, 37, 38.

This is the Speech of a Layman and a Lawyer! Think ye not, my Friends, that he was a Low Churchman? I wot he was,

Seeing then that these Things cannot be spoken against. Right, Mr. Town Clerk! their Dowdy Image was establish'd by Law; and if it had been a Broomstick it would have had the Priests on its side, and must have been worshipped. Where the Carcass is, there will the Ravens be gathered together.

Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. So they would if the Priests had let them alone. But the Craftsmen had goaded their Sides with the Cry of the Church, till the poor Reprobates were stark Mad,

What Man is there that knoweth not &c. Why every Body knew that Madam Diana's Palace at Ephesus had more Superstition and Peter-Pence paid to it, and consequently had a greater Swarm of Chaplains, than all the Divinity Shops in Asia besides. She had Men and Money of her Side. What! could not all this secure her? No; her Bully Boys were afraid of Jesus Christ, and Two or Three Dissenting Teachers, his Servants.

And the Image which fell down from Jupiter. Fell down from Jupiter! What great Lyars some Priests are, my Beloved! They will needs fetch all their Fables and filthy Ware out of Heaven it self; and yet who hath less Interest there? Their very Ballads, and Raree-shews are
father'd

father'd upon Divine Right. Oh Sirs, the brazen Front of some Men! The Town Clerk here conforms himself to their manner of speaking: But take my Word for it, the Man knew better.

The Image which fell down from Jupiter. As I was just now saying, all the Priests Lumber comes from God; and yet they are scared out of their Wits, lest Men should take it from them; as if God could not defend his own Gifts and Institutions. This preposterous Conduct betrays them. Either they believe not in God; or know that they bely him: Both Cases, my Brethren, are very common. *Whosoever feareth the Lord, need not fear what Man can do unto him.*

Mr. Town-Clerk proceeds. *For ye have brought hither these Men, which are neither Robbers of Churches, nor yet Blasphemers of your Goddess.* Well urged, 'If the Men are innocent, why do ye abuse them? If they preach false Doctrine, why do ye not confute them? If they come not to your Establish'd Church, why do ye not convince them that they ought to come? Or, because ye cannot Answer them, do ye therefore Mob them? It is plain, that the honest Men have neither stolen any of your Madam's consecrated Trinkets, nor called her Whore.

Wherefore if Demetrius and the Craftsmen which are with him, have a Matter against any Man, the Law is open, and there are Deputies, let them implead one another.

Better still! This is Reasoning now; a Practise the Craftsmen do not care for; the Arm of Flesh is their best Argument, and at that too they are generally laid in the Dirt. Gentlemen, says the Town-Clerk, it is evident ye distrust your Cause, by not trusting to the Merits of the Law. All external Advantages are for you; ye are in your own Town, ye have most Friends and most Money; and let me tell ye too, Gentlemen, ye have most Assurance, else I should never have found ye here bawling for your Church, and breaking the Law, and to your eternal Scandal, besetting with your Numbers a few harmless Men, whose only Arms lie in the Innocence of their Lives, and in the force of what they say.

‘ If

• If you are vanquish'd with these Weapons, have the
 • Honesty to own it, or for shame be silent. If these
 • Men, Gentlemen, speak against the Law, why punish
 • ye them not by Law? But if ye have no Law against
 • them, neither have they any Transgression.

What Answer, trow ye, did the Craftsmen, or their
 Calves, the Multitude, make to this? Why verily, such
 an Answer, I guess, as they are wont to make to us every
 Day? I suppose they damn'd him for a *Whig*, and so
 got Drunk, and went home.

Oh, my Friends, the deplorable Condition of Men,
 that are out of Christ! And such are they who take
 their Religion from the *Craftsmen*. The Worshipers of
Diana would have been as Outragious for one of her
 Beagles, had the *Craftsmen* told them that the Beagle came
 down from *Jupiter*. My Brethren, let us cleave to our
 Bibles, yea, I say unto you, let us cleave unto our
 Bibles.

III. I come now to my Third and last General Head,
 namely, to end my Discourse with a short Word of Ap-
 plication; having, as I went along, anticipated my self,
 and made several Observations which would else have a-
 risen partly here.

The great Inference I shall make is, that *Craftsmen* or
High-Churchmen are at odds with Conscience and Truth,
 and afraid of them. And indeed to do them Justice, tho'
 in relation to God and Religion, there is no believing
 what they say; yet whenever they reason from their own
 Interests, they reason well. By this Craft we have our
 Wealth. As to their flourish about *Diana* and her *High*
Church, it has not, in Point of Argument, common Sense
 in it. All they assert is, that all *Asia* worshiped her; as
 if, because *Diana* was then uppermost, therefore Jesus
 Christ ought to have been kept undermost. They could
 not stand *Paul's* Logick; he appeal'd to Facts, he appeal-
 ed to Reason, he appeal'd to Conscience.

They therefore (that is *Diana's High Priests*, or the
Overseers of her *Fopperies*, and *Fingerers* of her *Gain*) form
 a Design to oppress a Man whom they could not answer.

There

There was no bearing it, that Men should be conducted in their Religion by inward Conviction and the Grace of God, and not by them, who had no Advantage from either, for the Support of their Impositions.

Beside, if all external Trumpery and Grimace in Religion, were certainly ridiculous and vain, as the Christian Religion certainly reaches: If Postures, Cringes, Shrines, Musick, and the like bodily Devotion, were so far from signifying any thing, that they were a certain and pernicious Contradiction to the simple Institution of Jesus whose Will was fulfilled by believing in him, and living well; then were the Craftsmen like to be but little Reverenced, and to have but little Custom for their Shrines and their small Wares; a Priest dress'd up in an antrick Coat, and making Mouths before a dead Image, would make a merry Figure before the People, instead of an awful one, as formerly; and in the midst of all their holy Hubbub and Solemnity, a Christian need but ask them one short Question, *Who required these Things at your Hands?* And they were confounded.

What do they do therefore in this Case? Do they defend their Church-gear by Reason, or by Reason confute *Paul*? No: *Paul* asserted, that *they be no Gods which are made with Hands*; the most self evident Truth that ever was asserted by any Man. They cannot answer it; nor yet will they own themselves in the Wrong; but they will punish the Apostle for being in the Right. Well; in order to this, do they go to Law with him? Not that neither? *Paul* and his Companions had offended no Law: They were peaceable Men; they were loyal Subjects, and good Livers: They were Contenders for Virtue and Piety; and they had not utter'd a Syllable against *Diana's Idol*; but what resulted from the Eternal Truths which they delivered.

What Course then do the Craftsmen take with them? Why, a very extraordinary one in it self, but very common with them; even the Course of unprecedented Power and Oppression. They were chargeable with no Legal Crime; All their Offence was, that they enraged the Craftsmen, by opening the Gospel Day-light, upon the dark

dark Minds of the misled Multitude. They therefore shew their Rage, and have the innocent Men seiz'd and deprived of their Liberty, without shadow of any legal Process against them. Nay it does not appear that they had yet found a Name for the Crime they alledged, but the Men were confined at Random, and probably *plus* to great Charges.

This shews their Spirit; and the Priestly Rage will be gratified over the Belly of Truth, of Innocence, of Humanity, of Law, and of Religion it self. It cannot brook the least good Office done to Human-kind; all its Absurdities are sacred; and yet nothing is sacred enough to mollify or restrain it, ever unforgiving, ever gnashing its Teeth. Truth will perpetually be its Foe, and therefore it will perpetually be in a Flame.

And this shews too the Amiability of an opposite Spirit; I mean, the amiable Spirit of the Gospel: Where did ever our Blessed Saviour, who held all Power in Heaven and Earth, and could command Legions of Angels; where, or when did he, in the midst of Dangers, Opposition, and Abuses, ever oppress or punish even his unbelieving and implacable Enemies? Where did ever *Paul*, who had the Power and Assistance of the Holy Ghost, and who had the Power and Assistance of Miracles, where and when did ever he shew any Resentment to his bitterest Foes among the *Jews*, or his most idolatrous Gainsayers among the *Gentiles*?

And what Account is to be given for this Diametrical Opposition between these two Spirits? I mean the Spirit of the Gospel, and the Spirit of High Priests? Why, none but this, that Christ and his Apostles sought no Empire but over wickedness and Error, by the sole Means of Grace, Gentleness, and Persuasion; and they who have opposite Ends to serve, must bring them about by Delusion, Violence, and Force. This I will maintain is a certain Criterion to mark out Truth and Falshood, and true and false Teachers. And I defy all the Priests upon Earth to shew, that the Internal Religion of Jesus, wants for its Stay or its Advancement, the External Influence of worldly Power. It was always purest and flourished
most

most, when all human Power was against it. Slaves and Hypocrites may be made by it; but Religion rejoices in Liberty and Sincerity.

When Men are angry in Defence of their Opinions, and oppress for their sake; let them not belye Christ, and say, it is for him; but let their Passions be made to answer for what nothing but their Passions can produce. Why must Ambition, Avarice, and Revenge, be father'd upon Religion, which abhors them all; Why must Bitterness and Cruelty, be laid at the Door of the Father of Mercies; *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis, &c.*

We cannot bear such Violence offered to our Reason and our Language, as any longer to hear Things called by wrong and unnatural Names; or to see barbarous and impious Actions varnish'd over with holy Colours and godly Pretences. It gets the better of our Patience, and is an Affront to our Religion, We cannot find *Christ* in the Actions of *Belial*; nor can we see the *Holy Man* in the Oppressor. They that would resemble *Jesus Christ*, must do as he did, and not do what he never did; and they who will in any Case follow the religious Measures taken here by the Idolaters of *Diana*, in the Case of *Paul*, must forego their Title to Christianity, and argue as these Idolaters did, *By this Craft we have our Wealth*: And then the Religion of the New Testament will not be profan'd in their Quarrel.

But why seize *Paul*, or any Body that belong'd to him? Is one Man such a Terror to many, that he must be punished before it appears that he deserved any Punishment at all, and before he is heard; or is it dangerous to hear him? And are they afraid of his Defence in a legal Trial, as much as of his Preaching and of his Reasoning?

It is plain, that downright Oppression, that is Power without Law, was the whole Scope of their Proceedings, and Revenge their only Motive. It is plain, that *Paul* was not running away: His whole Business was to publish Truth; he was at *Ephesus* on purpose; he did it every Day; he preached in Publick; he taught in their Synagogues, he disputed in their Schools. And he did all this so publickly and so effectually that the *Arch Craftsman*

charges him with having *perswaded and turned away much People*. Ay, that grip'd; his Reasoning prevailed, and the Craft was in Danger.

Let us now, my Beloved, mark the very different Situation of *Paul* and his Adversaries; they were in Possession of an Establish'd Church, and of all its Revenues, and of the Superstition of the People, who run mad for the Church at the Pleasure of the Priest. The Law, no doubt, was partial to them, being made by Men of their own Religion; and the Judges and Magistrates were all of the same. The People were of Opinion that their Church was of Divine Institution, and that Heaven was on their Side. The Philosophers, and all they who govern'd the Schools, and had the Education of Youth, were of that Church, being every one Heathens, except perhaps a few who judg'd for themselves, and could distinguish Natural Religion, instituted by God, from the absurd Medley of Rituals, invented by the Priests. The Christian Religion was as yet but in its Infancy. In short, the *Craftsmen* govern'd all Things; Earth was in their Possession, and Heaven they pretended was the Champion.

Here are Severities and Advantages enough to put Truth out of Countenance, had Truth been amongst them. In reality, she wants not so many. The *Craftsmen* knew this, and shew'd that they did so by their outrageous Behaviour.

Let us now view *Paul*, and see what terrible Arms he bears that are so frightful to the *Craftsmen*; he was a Stranger; he was a Dissenter; he had no Equipage to dazzle Peoples Eyes; no pompous Garments to win their Reverence, nor Wealth to bribe their Affections; he sought no Popularity, in indulging Men in their Vices, or encouraging them in their Errors. In short, all the numerous Advantages of his Adversaries, the Priests, were so many Obstacles and Disadvantages to him, the Apostle. To conclude, he had only Truth on his Side; which render'd him an Over-match for all the Priests then in the World. All the Privileges, all the Advantages he desired, was a fair Hearing. This, it seems, he had obtained

tained of the Town; and it had its Effect, Here was his Crime, and here began the Priestly Fury, the fiercest, the most brutish of all others.

Shameless Men! was it not enough that Reason and Religion were both against you; and that you would neither be Profelytes to them your selves, nor suffer, with your Wills, that others should: But must you likewise be proclaiming *their* invincible Power, and your own Imbecility and Nakedness, by virulently using direct, undisguised Force to stop their Mouths? What Impudence! What Folly!

What! you that boasted your Conformity to the Law, and your Establishment by the Law! you that were the Professors of all Scholarship! that were Proprietors of the Arts and Sciences, and of the great Endowements given for their Support! you that instructed the Young and the Old, and controul'd the Consciences of both! you that were the sacred Administrators of Religion! you that shut and open'd Heaven and Hell! you that were the Privy-Conucillors of the Gods! In the Name of Amazement, what could undermine you; what could annoy you; or, if you are not hurt your selves, why do you oppress others? By this Method you do but shew your cloven Feet. *Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?*

F I N I S



